

LEVEL
ONE

FOR THE UNITARIAN
Berk. Call 119

The Cheerful Letter

place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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No. 2

OBSCURER DEPTHS IN NOBLE LIVES

BY REV. JOHN M. TROUT

"And upon the top of the pillars was lily-work." So ends the description of the two great pillars that supported and adorned King Solomon's temple.

The sentence is a climax. In ancient building, flowers always were significant symbols. Witness the role of the acanthus on Corinthian pillars and of the lotus flower in Egyptian architecture. But the point is not merely the exquisiteness of pattern in the work that ornamented these temple columns. It lies in the fact that the carving was at the very top, in dim light where dust and cobwebs might collect, and so almost out of sight.

"But why," we ask, "should Hiram of Tyre, Solomon's master-workman, lavish time and pains and strength upon carving that forever might remain unseen?" The obvious answer is that no true artist does his work primarily for show. He is concerned with the creation of a whole, every part of which, seen or unseen, is essential to the design. Henry Adams, writing on eleventh and twelfth century churches in France, expresses the opinion that cathedral figures often are placed far aloft or beneath eaves or obscurely in shadows in order to suggest the comprehensive and universal nature of Christianity together with the indifference of great art to tricks that seek to arrest attention.

Here, then, is the age-long parable of beauty among cobwebs, virtue amid shadows. We may call it the Parable of Corners and of Hidden Nooks. Let us first remember that great buildings are erected to be seen. Their majesty should overawe us. Both in life and art there is importance also in the hidden part; there

is lily-work in the shadows. It would be a pity to spend a day facing the great central figure of the Lincoln Memorial Building in Washington and fail to glance at the porch in the rear. The artist was concerned for the face and form of his Emancipator but also for his vaulted ceiling.

In judging leaders and friends of our choice, we cannot afford to ignore corners and hidden places. There are persons about whom we learn all at a first meeting. During a half-hour they manage to inform us that they come from Boston or New York, that they are well-connected and reasonably well-off, that they have distinguished friends, and that they are conversant with what is going on in the world. There are other persons to whom one returns again and again, each time discovering something unobserved before. It is like visiting the Alhambra, where the twelfth view is found more rewarding than the first, or the Sistine Madonna where, after repeated study of the Mother and Child, we realize that there is meaning also in the angels of the picture. The depths of some lives we never exhaust.

Long ago, a prophet who was sent to Bethlehem to anoint a king set a standard for leaders. He inquired of Jesse about his sons, and the father brought in the tallest and most striking of them. But the prophet remembered that the Eternal looked not upon outward appearance, but within; and the second son was summoned. When seven young men had passed before him, the prophet shook his head and asked: "Is there not yet another?" Then Jesse sent for the youngest from the pasture where he kept the sheep. The prophet beheld David and thought: "What charm, what promise of power,

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what fruitage yet to be, what depths unfathomed!" He turned to the father. "This," said he, "shall be the king."

It is tragic when some chance incongruity obscures saints in the eaves or lily-work dimly discerned. Men have missed friends and leaders—as the world came near losing Lincoln—because of some ungainliness. Physical deformity may be a terrible handicap; and men have suffered from the obscurity of the place in which they were born. It was said of the Son of Man: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

How much we miss if our glance never mounts to the tops of columns or delves down into the crypts of life! Charles W. Eliot, long the distinguished president of Harvard University, who must have known multitudes of men, wrote so far as we know but one biography, the life of John Gilley, islander and fisherman, his summer neighbor on the Maine coast. But why did he choose John Gilley? President Eliot said: "He was the true American type, one of the forgotten millions. Here was no material for fame, but material for normal development through mingled joy and sorrow, labor and rest, adversity and success." If we measured our admirations by some such standard, if we retained the prophet's eye for those whom others pass by, our ties of friendship might be as firm as those that bound Charles Eliot at Northeast Harbor to John Gilley on Baker's Island.

It is clear that we cannot afford to overlook the traceries that adorn the tops of pillars or the figures of saints that are half-hidden beneath belfries or eaves. Hiram of Tyre, designer and builder of

King Solomon's temple, is kin to the unknown Psalmist who said to God: "In the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom." The last word of a noted architect to friends about to visit Lincoln, Chartres, Milan, and Cordova cathedrals was this: "Study interiors." "Know thyself" was the reiteration of Socrates to Athenian youth. And Jesus commanded his followers to do nothing for show in alms-giving, self-denial or prayer. For abiding happiness men always must come back to the hidden places and often to experiences that seem commonplace.

One of this year's college graduates applied with little hope for a position to which hundreds of other girls aspired. Her mother said: "In applying, you must be extremely careful about your approach; and you must have a new dress and a permanent wave, for in these days details are important." The girl came away from the interview surprised to have received a promise of the coveted position. Her employer told her some months later why she had been chosen. "It was not merely your appearance and your answer to my questions," he said. "The impression grew upon me that, if I turned you down, you would certainly seek and probably find a better position than I was offering. Such determination was what I most wanted." Where does such determination come from? Out of self-knowledge, from the hidden part.

To neglect what is within is to invite disappointment and tragedy. It is relatively easy to ornament the outside of the house of life with columns that adorn and rose windows upon which the rays of rising and setting sun may play. But the interior, when visited, may reveal emptiness or neglect, or things ugly and unseemly, the results of living to be seen of men—no saints near the eaves, no half-hidden angels, no lily-carving upon the pillars. Disillusioned, one turns to other lives, less attractive without but lacking nothing within of poise or power. The Son of Man came out of obscure Nazareth, poor and unlettered, yet how complete and lovely within!

All men's comrade!

What if or yet, what mole, what flaw,
what lapse,

What least defect or shadow of defect,
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
. thou crystal Christ!

As we think of barren interiors, then
of interiors full of richness, out of the
depths of our desire wells a prayer like
that of the Psalmist: In the hidden part,
give me the wisdom and the beauty of
God!

—*Boston Transcript.*

A PRAYER

O God, our Heavenly Father, with
morning offerings of gratitude and glad-
ness we come to thee!

We thank thee for the charity and
friendliness of those about us!

For their readiness to excuse and for-
give.

Let the thought of thy service which
awaits our strength take full possession
of our hearts and minds.

Teach us, at *least the graces* of the
Christ-like spirit.

Give us more wisdom, more charity of
judgment, more patience, and above all
a bigger and truer sympathy.

Hear our petition—O God, for strength
and peace, for gentleness and patience in
all our dealings; for gracious thoughts,
and kindly instincts; for purity of heart
and firmness of trust.

Thus let it be unto us a holy duty to be
always cheerful, always hopeful, and to
spread about us the seeds of kindness,
brotherliness and trust. Amen.

YOUR 1946 AUTO

Indulging in the luxury of prediction,
Austin M. Wolf, automotive consulting
engineer, drew a picture of the automo-
bile of 1946.

"Project yourself ten years ahead,"
suggested *Science Service*, summarizing
his address:

"Time—Summer of 1946.

"Place—A cross-country super-high-
way. A motor car speeds by.

"The car is compact but shaped like a

tear-drop, traveling large end forward.
Its five passengers sit in individual
movable seats in airy comfort despite
the sweltering day. Their luggage is
concealed in the bulbous front end. They
sit three in front and two in the rear,
just ahead of the motor.

"The car has six tires, two in front
and four in the rear where the power is
applied. But the car's occupants have no
worries about those tires. They are
self-inflating and if a blowout occurs
they will not collapse and throw the car
into a crash.

"Despite the heat, there are no wor-
ries about the battery running dry. It
is self-filling. And six months from
now, in the cold winter, the car's owner
will have no sleepless nights worrying
about starting in the frosty morning.
He knows his car has two fuel tanks.
In cold weather it starts with a light
volatile fuel and then, when hot enough,
switches over automatically to the ordi-
nary variety. . . .

"On the dashboard only two instru-
ments are calibrated: the speedometer
and the gasoline-gage. The oil pressure,
ampere charging or discharging rate,
and the engine temperature consist only
of red and green lights with the red
flashing when something is wrong. The
1935 fad, taken from aviation, for mul-
titudinous dials with wide range of
readings, has passed.

"The trend started in 1936, when the
brake lever went up on the instrument
board, has been followed by the placing
of the gear-shift to the same spot.
There is plenty of leg-room for all occu-
pants in the front seats.

"Back in the factory the car was
stamped out of two great pieces of
metal at one operation and then welded
lengthwise down the middle."

—*Literary Digest.*

TROUBLES

"If you talk about your troubles
And tell them o'er and o'er,
The world will think you like 'em
And proceed to give you more."

—*Pittsburgh Post.*

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

Letters should be addressed to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Persons writing to the Department for the first time should ask for an enrollment blank and give as reference the name and address of their minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

CHEERFUL LETTER WORKERS

We call your attention to the Secretary's Annual Report published in this issue of the *Magazine*. If you were unable to attend the *Cheerful Letter* Conference on May 21 this report will give you an idea of the work accomplished this past year with possible suggestions for your committee next year. If you have any questions please feel free to write this Department at any time. We always are eager to help wherever possible and to keep your interest at a high mark. To some of our workers, this issue will greet you at some vacation land. Please do not forget your *regular correspondent* during the summer months. A picture postcard, now and then, will take the place of the usual monthly letter. The next issue will appear about the first of September, there being no separate August number.

CORRESPONDENTS

These *regular correspondents* may be adopted after postcard consultation with Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass. This should be done in order to avoid duplication in arranging for *regular correspondents* and it might be well to make a second choice.

1. Mrs. Cicero M. Testerman, B. 41, Rugby, Va., writes a very good hand and would make an excellent correspondent. Her age is 52 and she is the mother of six children, aging from 11 to 29. She writes that she is not especially stout but able to enjoy sewing of any kind.

2. I would like to be enrolled in the Cheerful Letter Exchange. I am a widow

woman, 59 years old, and have one boy at home whose age is 14. We live in a poor mountain country and a long ways from town. We go to church occasionally but friendly letters would help a lot. Mrs. Mary McCutcheon, Rupert, Ark.

3. Mrs. Susie Sanders, R. 2, Benton, Ark., is 28 years old and the mother of four children; boys 1, 3, 7, and girl 5. She is anxious for a regular correspondent and looks forward to some one adopting her as such.

4. Mrs. Nellie Wilbur, 4294 Sandis Street, San Diego, Calif., is a widow and all her children married except one son in forestry who is away on duty, leaving her quite lonesome. She has been a member of the Exchange for more than 25

years but would welcome further correspondence.

5. I am a young married woman living in the country. I am 19 years old and a good Christian. My ambition is to have some pen pals and I will answer all letters. Also I like to sew and reading interests me, too. Mrs. Arthur Edmonson, R. 5, Athens, Tenn.

6. Mrs. Fred Richardson, Rugby, Va., is a new member, 26 years old, with a daughter, 5 years old. She seeks a regular correspondence and something to amuse the little one.

APPEALS

There is a constant demand to see each Appeal in print, but, of course, this is quite impossible. The Department reads each letter carefully and if the request is within its province it is printed. There always is a waiting list and if possible each Appeal is published in turn. These are not to be taken as *regular correspondents* and need not be answered a second time.

1. Mrs. Susie Thompson, R. 2, Norton, Kans., is 62 years old and a widow. Her children are married and gone and she keeps house alone. She is not able to get about a great deal and would welcome good reading. She is willing to pass it along to other friends when she is through with it. This certainly is friendly service! Quilt patches of gingham and muslin would prove useful.

2. I have been lingering for a long time under the doctor's care and you don't know how much a little cheer would help a lonely woman of 62 years. I have one boy at home, age 12, but living back in a lonesome place, with no house in sight and no one passing, it is rather a drab life. I close my letter in this ailing condition and trust we will not be forgotten. Mrs. Charles Smith, R. 1, Polkton, N. C.

3. A mother of two children, a boy 7 and a girl 5, writes for admission to the Exchange. She attends the Methodist Church monthly and her name is Mrs. Jennie Perkinson, R. 4, Decatur, Tenn.

She does not make any special request but leaves it to our judgment for some kind of cheer.

4. Mrs. W. R. Huddleston, R. 1, B. 350, Farmville, Va., lives in a poor vicinity and used to attend the Presbyterian Church. Now she is unable to go and she would appreciate some religious literature. She is 56 years old and has two girls, ages 20 and 23. Along with the literature one might add some sewing materials or embroidery.

5. It has been a long, long time since I have had a letter published in this *Magazine* and I hope this one will appear in print. My husband is just sitting up from pneumonia so will not be able to work for some time. Please will someone send him some reading material, cross-word puzzles or pleasantries? It would help so much. Our little baby would love a toy or so and if anyone has some embroidery, that would help also. Mrs. Chloe Gardner, Scotland, Ark.

6. I am 27 years old and live on a rented farm with my aged father and mother. We would so appreciate a bit of cheer because we are shut in most of the time. Mother and I like to sew or embroider and a small package of materials would certainly cheer us. Miss Wove Anderson, Grant, Va.

7. Mrs. Lloyd Turner, Clinton, Ark., is 26 years old, with a boy aged 4. The family lives in a country town with a population of about 700. Her little boy asks for some picture postcards and she and her husband would enjoy good reading, or any other kind of cheer.

8. Mrs. Harry Cikanek, R.F.D. 3, Box 68, Lenoir, N. C., has the care of four small children and her husband is recovering from a broken thigh. The family does not have the means to go anywhere or to afford a newspaper, and always at home gets on a person's nerves. Should you care to send a little cheer they would appreciate books, magazines or amusements for the children.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. A. C. Hottinger, Hebron, Ohio.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE
CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE
1935-1936**

Your Secretary very humbly presents her annual report. By the work this year she has gained an insight into the depth, scope, and importance of the Cheerful Letter Committee.

Just as love is not lost in the giving, but is doubled by being shared, so this work cannot be measured by the number of letters, packages, or books—not even by the number of people who receive our cheer. “Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—himself, his hungering neighbor and me,” might be paraphrased into “Who gives herself with her cheer, cheers three, herself, her correspondent and Me.”

But although the good the committee does cannot be measured, still there are many interesting facts and methods which must be recorded.

Meetings of the Cheerful Letter Exchange have been held each month, October to May inclusive, as well as the annual meeting during Anniversary Week, and Mrs. Stevens has presided at them all. The short opening devotional services were conducted by the chairman, Mrs. Stevens, and by Mrs. Russell Wise, Mrs. J. Jarvis Preble and Mrs. Royden Leonard, directors of the General Alliance. During the year 60 branches have been represented at one meeting or another. Bulfinch Place and First Church, Boston, Dorchester First, Canton, Lexington, Medford, Quincy, Roslindale, Waltham, Wayland, West Newton, and Wollaston have had one or more present every time. The average attendance was 50 and average number of branches 36, the largest number being 69 in March when the Central Committee served coffee and doughnuts in the Fifield Room following the meeting.

Besides presiding at all meetings Mrs. Stevens also conducted conferences at Rowe Camp and Star Island, as well as speaking at several other places. As chairman for distributing Bibles she sent away 17 ordinary sized Bibles and one

pulpit, one which went to a small church in Georgia, and questionnaires reveal about 32 sent by branches.

Letters were sent out to every branch to encourage the use of the sunshine bags—whose pennies make up the deficit on the magazine expense. About one-fourth of the branches answering the questionnaire do not use the bags, but Miss Jones reports sufficient money in hand for the summer expenses.

Incredible as it may seem branches still do *Cheerful Letter Work* without the *Magazine*. Every chairman, at least, should subscribe, as the *Magazine* is an indispensable link between the Central Committee, the Local Committees and the correspondents.

Remember its original purposes are unchanged—to cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely or discouraged; to help those who live far from schools; to establish circulating libraries in isolated communities, schools and colleges.

This is the *Magazine's* 45th birthday! Let us wish it a really happy birthday with our subscriptions. Occasionally we hear from one who has received the *Magazine* for more than forty of its 45 years of continuous publication.

Each Department Chairman will present her own work, so that I shall not report in detail. Your Secretary can testify, however, to the tremendous amount of work turned out through these departments, and to the efficiency and consecration of the chairmen.

Questionnaires have been received from 133 branches—not as many as last year. Mrs. Brush's work in connection with All Souls Church, New York, must again be mentioned because of the tremendous amount of work done and number of articles sent. We salute you and all the other loyal chairmen who are carrying on the high purposes of the *Cheerful Letter*!

The questionnaires reveal the usual activities done in the proven acceptable ways. They also reveal several unexpected facts such as that many committees do not subscribe to the *Magazine*, many do not have Sunshine bags, some

have no correspondents, and that some send no packages at Christmas. Surprising and satisfying, also, is the fact that many committees do *local Cheerful Letter* Work ranging from letters to parish members away or ill, to extensive contacts with *local* charitable organizations.

Time and effort do not permit mentioning each Branch which has reported especially worthwhile or unusual projects. Each in its own way has fulfilled its duties well. One chairman writes, "This is a small report but the *Cheerful Letter* friendships between the chairman and the four families has covered a period of fifteen years and represents an affection and friendliness that goes deep into our hearts." This is the soul of *Cheerful Letter* Work.

Respectfully submitted,

RACHEL M. STONEHAM,

Secretary.

May 21, 1936.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

This department reports a very active and fruitful year. Several changes have occurred in co-operation with many suggestions from the field. They have worked out most advantageously both to the department and to the worker. Our friendly service is conducted by volunteer workers and to accomplish all the necessary work, a systematic course must be planned and adhered to. The chairman of this department wishes to express her appreciation to several faithful workers for services rendered.

The work is carried on outside of Headquarters, although satisfactory information is always obtainable in the Alliance rooms. Of the 384 Alliance branches in the United States and Canada, 226 have *Cheerful Letter* Committees, and 148 branches are listed with *regular correspondents*, ranging from 1 to 145. There are about 1,000 *regular correspondents* on the list today and some of our workers have corresponded regularly for over 30 years.

The January issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine* included the change of securing *regular correspondents*. For many years, the chairman of this committee gave out all names. Now the policy is changed and a committee chairman may select all *regular correspondents* from the *Magazine*. This change came about in answer to many requests, and what was a trial experiment is now a permanent system. Two hundred twenty-one Appeals have been published and 25 *regular correspondents*. Helpful information to *Cheerful Letter* workers has also been published regularly.

Approximately 100 names have been assigned to 40 branches. The Minister's Reference for a new member lost its value and the department inaugurated the Enrollment Blank which is sent to each prospective member and in most cases a shut-in returns a truer and more detailed story of their family. These blanks are considered carefully and if approved appear in the *Magazine* as *Cheerful Letter regular correspondents* or as an Appeal for local branches to answer. There is a difference between a *regular correspondent* and an Appeal.

Another venture this year has been the rural school. A great deal of time has been given to this part of the work. New teachers have been added to our list through a contact with Superintendents of Education in certain states where our kind of help was greatly needed. Branches may adopt these one or two room schools and keep the teachers supplied with various wants. An approved list of helps has been prepared and may be obtained from the chairman. This work will especially appeal to all Alliance members, young or old.

Next year more time will be devoted to the *regular correspondents*. A plan is now under way to help them to a closer acquaintanceship—to have a better understanding of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange. In some cases, it is merely a name, and not the Friendly Service that we maintain.

This department cannot function without the assistance of our local chairmen

and to them we publish our hearty thanks. Their consistent co-operation has been admirable. Every Appeal has been answered and it is impossible to estimate the generosity shown at Christmas time. The *Cheerful Letter* rules have been kept fairly well and in most cases wisdom has been used in giving. The hundreds of letters received by our workers are a constant reminder that our work is recognized and our educational department of great value. The work done seems small in comparison with the letters of gratitude received. The feeling of helping and sharing with these shut-ins is one meaning of religion.

LAURA M. HURST,

Chairman Correspondents and Appeals.

HOME STUDY DEPARTMENT

The time of year has arrived to make a survey of our work since the last annual meeting when reports were given. Not so long ago a *Cheerful Letter* friend asked if it was too late in the year to find a teacher for a boy. There is no calendar beginning or end to the "home study." We go right on through the vacation period.

Our teaching personnel has changed little the past year; we are most fortunate in having splendid teachers. One of our interested helpers, Miss Elizabeth Curtis, we have lost by death. At present some are not active for the time being because there has been no call for their particular subject. They are willing to take up the work again when the need comes. We have 16 teachers corresponding with pupils in the following subjects—music, drawing, French, German, Greek, English literature, written English, algebra, bible history and journalism. Two teachers have three pupils each in drawing and music. Marietta, Ohio, Lexington and Quincy, Massachusetts, each furnish us with two teachers. New York City, Rutherford, New Jersey, Keene, Alsted and Charlestown in New Hampshire, Hartford, Connecticut, Taunton, Wollaston and Jamaica Plain in

Massachusetts complete the list.

While the volume of work may not seem great it is most valuable and definite progress has been reported. Many have been studying since 1933, and at present we have 20 pupils at work. We expect to have two more added to the number soon with English history and written English and then will have placed all applicants this year except the young men wishing help in interior decoration and forest ranger work, but suggestions have been given them as to sources of information whereby they can help themselves. In recent years because of unemployment some took advantage of spare time to study, but have been obliged to give up studying this year because an opportunity for work came. It is difficult to get much from study by correspondence unless one has a great desire to learn and so it doesn't take long for us to find out those who are seriously asking for help. It is very easy for them to grow careless about corresponding which is most discouraging to those offering help. However, we have many enthusiastic teachers and I'd like to let you know how some feel about the work.

Our teacher of music reports she has "three doing good work," and says, "I enjoy working with them so much. Even if they never turn out wonderful musicians I think that what I have done has brought them some joy, and isn't that the most important part of it?" I think that we all agree. One pupil (Arkansas) has only an organ to work with, but still hoping she will get a piano some day. Another pupil in North Carolina has been active in church work there, playing and helping with entertainments. She has sent \$1.00 several times to pay for music sent her, though of course has never been asked to do so. "I like the work so much and shall be glad to continue it," writes this teacher.

The teacher of English literature writes me, "He is a very fine student and has an amazing understanding and grasp of ideas for one who has had so little formal education. He is constantly sur-

prising me with some new idea or way of expressing an idea and really has a quaint sense of humor. Just now he is reading 'Ivanhoe' and likes it very much. He just finished 'A Tale of Two Cities' and I found that he not only liked it immensely but really got the underlying idea back of it and appreciated Dickens' style in a manner quite unlike that of the average high school and even college student. So I feel he is not only getting a surface knowledge of some of the classics of literature but also an appreciation of the authors themselves, their style, ideas and reflection of the times in which they lived and wrote. Of course discussion is always valuable and is necessarily limited because of the method of study, but I feel he is getting a great deal out of his work and he is a willing as well as intelligent pupil. I am glad to help in any way I can and feel that what I am doing is a very small contribution to the work of the home study department." I feel that I must take exception to her closing statement as she is making a large contribution to our work.

Further comments from teachers are encouraging to us. Another writes, "I feel that because of her obvious interest and desire to learn that it has been worth while."

About a pupil studying English we hear "she has proven herself to be an interested and faithful student since May 1933. Her sister says that she thinks these lessons in English have improved her speech and that they have been of value to her." Ending her letter she writes "it is a pleasure to continue in this work, I assure you."

The chairman of the branch of Providence First Church became interested in our work and much gratifying correspondence with her resulted in that branch taking care of the needs of a school teacher. Several branches have supplied us with text books during the year so that requests have been answered from mothers asking for books for their children to help in grade work. There have been fourteen such requests answered when books were supplied, and

nine dictionaries sent besides. Only one failed to acknowledge the receipt of a book sent.

Teaching an underprivileged person at a distance is a very real opportunity for service for many an Alliance woman. We hope that others will feel inclined to avail themselves of this privilege in our future work.

MARGARET M. DILLABY,

Chairman.

THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

This is the eighth annual report that I have had the privilege of presenting. The results of the Library work done by the Alliance Branches with the cooperation of the Library Chairman have been most gratifying this year, although your Library Chairman has been a good deal handicapped in doing without the clerical assistance she enjoyed last year, due to lack of funds.

Two unlooked for windfalls were the gifts of \$10 and \$100, to be spent for books and the shipment thereof. Much time, thought, and running around were necessary for the wisest expenditure of the money. Some very special needs of two settlement schools in Kentucky, one in Georgia, and of a Memorial Library in the Canadian Northwest, were met by more expensive books, while the balance went into carefully selected second-hand books, mostly school editions of the classics of literature, for parallel reading in the three schools chosen, a total of over 200 volumes for the money. The Memorial Library in the Canadian Northwest is receiving some 50 fine books of the better sort. This library is now a self-sustaining Town Library, but needs encouragement from time to time.

One large, outstanding Memorial Library was established this year, the Laura Patton Memorial Library of the Medford Branch. The recipient was one of the larger white schools in the mountain district of North Carolina. Besides a number of schools, we have assisted various missions and churches through the mountains.

Never has the Library Chairman received so many appeals from schools. Each case is interesting the schools ambitious and bent on improving their service to the rising generation of citizens. Always have I stressed the importance of aiding the children and young people who come within our influence, to grow up into good citizens, who will not only be useful to themselves, but who will be an asset rather than a liability to our nation. All that we, with our experience, can do in leading them in the right paths is well worth doing.

The schools which were helped range from very badly equipped small rural schools, where the teachers are bravely carrying on under great difficulties, to large, consolidated schools, which, however, often have little or no means for securing needed library books. Fifty-three schools were aided this year.

It has been tried by one Branch, and is suggested for others, the plan of having the Sunday School adopt as a permanent project a mission school, and collect books, games, crayons, Christmas toys and such trifles. The contact would be extremely good for the children on both sides, broadening their outlook, and increasing the mutual understanding and sympathy of varying parts of the country.

Our community libraries are of different sorts, and are scattered in vastly different sections of the country. The people using them have had varying degrees of opportunity. Space prevents my telling you many interesting things in connection with these libraries, thrilling sometimes where our big libraries are concerned, and many pleasant, or sad, but always very interesting stories connected with our smaller, but equally important community centers. A short report like this is difficult because the personal touch, the individual human story, is the vital spark of our *Cheerful Letter* work.

One hundred and twenty-eight places received books this year, 17 more than in any previous year of my chairmanship. Forty-one were new to us this year. The

largest library sent by any one Branch was Medford's Memorial Library of 450 volumes and 62 magazines. Fifty-three of the 128 were schools, while 76 were community centers, hospitals, sanatoria, penitentiaries and charitable centers. Twenty-three states and one province of Canada were represented in the distribution, a larger number than usual. In all, 6,287 books, 9,919 magazines, 60 pieces of music, 20 large pictures, at least four magazine subscriptions, 32 scrap books, 250 picture postcards, and 43 miscellaneous items were sent. You understand that these were all sent directly by the Alliances to the recipients, with the exception of the books purchased with the special funds described earlier, and that the actual books do not pass through the Library Chairman's hands. The figures are larger by 200 books than last year, a most satisfactory increase.

Forty-three Branches participated this year. I feel that the number of Branches interested, and their distribution, is our truest gauge. I am anxious to interest those in other states outside the influence and inspiration of our conferences in Boston, the practical side being that we could greatly enlarge our scope beyond the present more or less concentrated fields, were it not for prohibitive costs of distant shipments. For instance, one of our own Unitarian churches, a small, rural congregation in a western state, is very anxious for a good library, especially for the young people. Our work could cover the country, if our workers did.

As may be expected, the ever-vital energy and executive leadership of the chairman of All Souls', New York, who, with her bridge parties and other activities, earned ALL her *Cheerful Letter* dollars, led the field with 1,136 books and 1,443 magazines. Next in line were Lexington and Medford, Massachusetts, Montclair, New Jersey, and Hudson, Massachusetts. The efforts and faithful service of the other 38 Branches doing Library work this year are also worthy of commendation and warm praise.

MRS. HENRY REED BOWSER, *Chairman*.

CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

The whole field of *Cheerful Letter* work has been so well covered in the foregoing reports, there seems nothing more to say, and yet your chairman has the urge to add her contribution, if only for the reason of being identified with these faithful workers, whose zeal and conscientious work has maintained the high standards, and advanced the usefulness of the Exchange, and to also register her appreciation of their co-operation. It is fitting that we should pause for a moment in loving memory of three loyal workers who have been called to their Higher Reward during the year. Mrs. Kelt, a long time chairman of Brookline Second Alliance, whose devotion and understanding has carried much cheer and comfort to her several correspondents; Mrs. Potter of Buffalo, who started one of our outstanding libraries, which has since become a Town responsibility; and Mrs. Martha Fuller of Lebanon, N. H. We hold their names in loving memory.

Our list of "shut-ins," too, has had more than the usual losses. To their families, who may read these words, we send our sympathy, with the hope that their lives were somewhat cheered by their *Cheerful Letter* contacts.

May I here record, with grateful thanks, the gift of a generous check, which enabled your chairman to give small aid to seven students, a bit of extra comfort to two of our long-time correspondents, and a Thanksgiving box of "goodies" to five recently orphaned children of a very worthy correspondent? Indeed, the joy of sharing cannot be measured, nor the appreciation of the recipients adequately expressed, but it was a rare privilege to have been the "middle man"! It has been necessary to accept, with sincere regret, two resignations: Miss Hersey's, who served as Secretary faithfully and efficiently for 12 years, and Mrs. Stoneham's, equally faithful and efficient but for a shorter period. We wish them success in their new interests.

Visualize with me, if you can, the tre-

mendous amount of time, careful thought and planning, letters written and time to read those received, and incidentally postage and stationery which has been expended to make these reports possible.

May each Branch Chairman re-dedicate herself to this "*Friendly Service*" which the whole world needs more than ever before.

Can we not take for our slogan next year: "Every Branch Alliance a committee, every committee a subscriber to the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*"?

Cheerfully yours,

MABELLE H. STEVENS,

Chairman.

THE OLD COVERED BRIDGE

Old cellar holes with their naked and crumbling chimneys and with lilacs and day lilies still blooming beside their abandoned door stones, overgrown roads wandering through woods and no longer traversed by the wheels of buggies that once rattled cheerfully to meeting, old stone walls that in other days marked the boundaries of productive fields, but have now surrendered to the advancing forest—these things tell an eloquent story of human lives lived long ago. But I think there is no object more closely associated with the life of an earlier and simpler day, none over which the "old-timer" grows more sentimental, than the old covered bridge.

Before my reminiscent vision there appears a long, roofed, wooden structure, unpainted, weatherbeaten, and gray, crossing a wide, ceaselessly flowing river. Great arches of hand-hewn pine timbers, fourteen inches square, rise and fall along its tunnel-like length. Brilliant sunshine, striking through the crude, coarse lattice of the open south side, where the footway runs, forms a pattern of gigantic lace-work on the worn, dusty plank floor. A peep through one of the infrequent rectangular openings in the sheathed north side discloses the oncoming current-bearing mysterious flotsam, or in early spring great irregular cakes of

ice, from far New Hampshire and Vermont, gnawing endlessly and futilely at the pointed stone piers.

This was the Old Toll Bridge, one of the finest and longest of them all, which once spanned the broad Connecticut at Springfield and carried the east-and-west traffic for a century. Some ten years ago that ancient landmark was demolished to make room for a modern, roofless Memorial Bridge of concrete and steel. It is a better bridge than the old one, safer and more commodious, but I fancy I am not the only one of the "old-timers" to dream wistfully sometimes of the shadowy Old Toll Bridge of my boyhood.

The far end of the bridge shows as a small window in the distance. A group of small boys, familiar yet somehow strange to me, trudges along the roadway, scorning the footpath. They are chatting volubly, and flocks of bold sparrows, hunting for oats on the floor, rise up at their near approach and wait twittering in the rafters overhead. The boys are bound for the swimming holes in the lower reaches of the Agawam. Or perhaps it is winter and the tinkle of skates, swung from straps, suggests a day's sport on the ice of the flooded Old Bed of the Connecticut.

Boys in swimming—young barbarians at play! I never see them disporting themselves in the water—diving, sounding, floating, racing, treading water, playing pranks on one another—without recalling those days forty years ago, when we used to mount our bicycles and ride to Watershops Pond for a swim, or foot it across the Old Toll Bridge and the meadows of West Springfield, returning home as hot as when we started, and oh, so hungry.

I wonder if boys still "chaw" one another's clothes. It was one of the recognized ceremonials of swimming in my day. When Jim wasn't looking, you tied his shirt in hard knots, soaking them and pulling them with all your might. Old, much-worn shirts not infrequently met disaster in the process. When Jim emerged, wet and shivering,

it was great fun to watch him struggle with the results of your handiwork, while the whole gang set up the cry:

"Chaw roast beef!

The beef was tough,

And poor old granny

She couldn't get enough."

The quatrain seems now to make singularly little sense. I suppose it had some connection with the use of the teeth in untying the knots. Anyway, it was great sport—except when the joke was on you.

Swimming in tanks and artificial pools doesn't seem the same thing at all. One needs to feel the soft mud between one's toes and the brush of wet leaves across one's shoulders, and there should be sunken sticks to dive for, else what is the use of diving?

Skating in a rink, too, is only half a sport. Skating on a frozen stream is the real thing, where you can travel a mile or more without turning about and where perhaps your skates are the first to cut the glassy surface. The stream twists and bends, now broad, now narrow, winding through shady woods and between low meadow banks. Golden brown grasses and the ghosts of golden-rod and Queen Anne's lace peer at you above the snow. Leafless birch and alder saplings cast their delicate tracery on the ice. Crows flap cawing overhead. Little black openings in the ice near the bank invite you to sprawl out and suck up a biting cold drink. Sun and wind and deep blue sky lure you on and on, nor are you conscious of weariness until you remove your winged skates and start on the prosaic homeward trudge at twilight. That is the sort of skating we enjoyed beyond the Old Toll Bridge.

I can remember when the majority of the bridges which spanned the Connecticut and its tributaries above Springfield, with the exception of the railroad bridges, were built of heavy timbers laid upon stone abutments and supported by a more or less intricate pattern of wooden arches and criss-cross trusswork at the sides. Under the

longer bridges there were stone piers in midstream. Often the floor planking was laid without nails or spikes, to minimize the strain, and the planks rattled gloriously under wheels and hoofs and shook down a golden shower of dust to the water beneath. Dust floated in the sunshine that poured through the timber tracery, remnants of old circus and auction posters fluttered on the walls, and wisps of hay, snatched from lofty loads, ornamented the rafters overhead.

The whole was covered with a shingled or tinned roof designed to protect the bridge from the ravages of New England weather. On the gable at the end, above the entrance, there was usually a painted sign warning the traveler that a fine of two dollars would be imposed if his horses crossed the bridge at a pace faster than a walk.

Below the rural covered bridge lone fishermen sat patiently in flat-bottomed boats, and pleasure parties rowed singing around the bend, with baskets of picnic lunch beside them on the thwarts. Barefooted urchins stood gazing mutely down into the mystery of the rippling water, thinking the long, long thoughts of youth, or hopefully dropped worm-laden bent pins into the depths, while at night lovers stood in the moon-cast shadows and murmured their age-old phrases. From the foot of the Old Toll Bridge of my boyhood, a fussy little steamboat named the "Calla" snorted forth on warm summer evenings on what were known as moonlight excursions, or carried Sunday school picnic crowds down the river to Riverside Grove.

All this I associate with the covered bridge, but it was old when I was young, and it takes but a little imagination to picture the farmers of a still earlier day taking their wares to market over the antique span. It was sturdily built by sturdy pioneers who visioned not the day of speed and gasoline.

Yet ancient as these bridges appear to be, relics of a past era in our civilization, their antiquity is relatively not

great. The earliest scarcely date back to the Revolution. A few of those still standing were built during the first decade of the nineteenth century, but most of them were constructed in the fifties or even later. Nothing like a science of bridge building was in common use before eighteen fifty, and most of these structures were designed by rule of thumb and "judgment," and were fashioned by hand to serve the needs of the time and place.

Most of the old covered bridges in my part of the country either have disappeared or are doomed. Every year sees one or more of them give place to stark modern bridges, efficient but unlovely and unromantic. They belonged to the age of horse and buggy; they must bow before the march of progress. There are now scarcely a dozen to be found in the whole of Massachusetts. Soon they will be remembered only by a few of us who do not care for speed and who regret the passing of a picturesque and characteristic feature of the landscape.

—Clipped.

O, BLESSED PEACE

From morning's light through darkest night

Thy love encircles me.

Within Thine All-Protecting Might

My soul is one with Thee.

O, Blessed Peace! So safe to be!

O, peace for all mankind

Which Thou dost give for faith in Thee.

"Seek ye and ye shall find."

So shall our days with joy increase,

Thy will on earth be done.

For love is faith and faith is peace,

In Thee they are as one.

Amen.

—Edward J. Mackay.

Nothing can conquer the conscience of man, for the conscience of man is the thought of God.—Victor Hugo.

After England, Chile was the first country in the world to adopt Scouting.

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

LITTLE CAT

BY RALPH BERGENGREN

It was a nice night in June, and a large, round moon lighted the town where Little Cat lived, though there was nobody up and about to look at it. Everybody was in bed and sound asleep. First the children had gone to bed, the little children earlier than the bigger children. And then, some hours later, the grown-up people had gone to bed. Everybody had said Good Night, first the little children to the grown-up people and the older children, and then the older people to the grown-up people, and then grown-up people to each other.

Little Cat was also sound asleep in his basket behind the kitchen stove. But when old Grandfather Clock in the hall struck 12 he sat up in his basket and yawned and stretched and rubbed his eyes with his paws.

"Everybody else seems to be satisfied with that clock," said Little Cat to himself, "but it doesn't seem right to me. Not lately. And I seem to remember it was the same way last spring. The clock says 12, but I feel like 11. In winter when the clock says 12 I feel like 12. I don't understand it. I must ask Dog Wow what he thinks about it."

While Little Cat was saying this to himself he got out of his basket, did his exercises, washed his face with his paws, combed his whiskers with his claws, took his little cane out of the bottom of the basket, tucked it under his left front leg, and let himself out of the house. The large round moon made the gravel path to the front gate almost as light as day, and Little Cat walked down the path on his hind legs like a little gentleman.

"What a night! What a night!" said Little Cat. "Oh, those people! Those people! They think I'm asleep in my basket, and here I am, up and out and enjoying the beauties of nature. What fun! What fun!"

He saluted the moon with his little cane. Then he strolled down the street on his hind legs till he came to the

Smiths's house where Dog Wow lived in a house of his own in the back yard. There he turned in at the gate and went round the Smiths's house to Dog Wow's house. Dog Wow was sitting with his back to the moon looking at his shadow on the side of his house. He had on a straw hat with a long, blue ribbon, and was holding his head first on one side and then on the other.

"Good morrow, Dog Wow," said Little Cat, poking Dog Wow roguishly with his cane. Dog Wow lifted one ear and looked over his shoulder.

"Good morrow, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "I was just trying on my new straw hat. Do you think it becomes me?"

"A becoming hat, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "But, why such a long ribbon?"

"It's what they call a child's hat, Little Cat," exclaimed Dog Wow. "You don't think it makes me look too much like a child, do you?"

"No, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "Nobody would mistake you for a child."

"I'm glad you think so, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "I found it in an ash barrel only this morning. Suppose we go to the bonny brook and then I can see myself as others see me. And you can see yourself too."

"I have no desire to see myself, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "But I will accompany you to the brook."

So the two started for the brook, which flowed under a bridge about a mile away, chatting of this and that as they went along. They passed the dark houses and wondered why the people who lived in them were in bed and asleep when the world was so beautiful to look at.

"What I mean to say, if you understand me, Little Cat," said Dog Wow, "is that of course they have to sleep sometime. You and I have to sleep sometime. But examine the difference. When the weather is unpleasant at night we sleep at night, and when the weather is unpleasant during the day we sleep during the day. But no matter how unpleasant

the weather is during the day, these people are up and about. And no matter how pleasant the weather is during the night, they are in bed and asleep."

"It's a good thing for us, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "There they are asleep—and here we are up and about."

"But think what they miss, Little Cat," said Dog Wow.

"I suspect the truth is, Dog Wow," said Little Cat seriously, "that they don't care as much as we do about the beauties of nature. They like pictures better. That's why they put all those big pictures along the roadsides."

"The funny thing about that, Little Cat," said Dog Wow, "is that you never see them stopping to look at the pictures. But I fancy you're right. If they didn't like them, they wouldn't have so many of them about."

Chatting in this thoughtful way they went on toward the brook, Little Cat walking on his hind legs like a little gentleman, and Dog Wow walking on his hind legs part of the time, with his front paws crossed behind his back. But this made him so tall that when they conversed he came down on all fours so that they could hear each other without shouting. And the night was so quiet that when they were going by the Perkins's house they heard the clock strike.

"One o'clock, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "Hickery, dickery dock. The mouse ran up the clock. The clock struck one and down he ran. Hickery, dickery dock."

"What a memory you have for the poets, Dog Wow!" said Little Cat. "But it doesn't feel like one o'clock to me. It feels like 12 o'clock. It's been that way for several weeks. When the clock strikes 12, it feels to me like 11. I don't understand it."

"That's easy, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "And I know why that is, because I've heard the Smiths talking about what they call saving the daylight. When spring comes, they move their clocks one hour ahead. And that makes them get up one hour earlier and so they call it saving the daylight."

"But why, Dog Wow?" said Little Cat.

"Why don't they just get up one hour earlier?"

"It's their way of doing things, Little Cat," explained Dog Wow. "They do everything by the clock. When the clock says it's time to get up, they get up. When the clock says it's time to eat, they eat. When the clock says it's time to go to bed, they go to bed. That's why they wear little clocks on their front legs and are always looking at them."

"I think I see, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "They want to get up one hour earlier and at the same time they don't want to get up one hour earlier. So they make the clocks say it's one hour earlier. And then they get up one hour earlier without feeling as if they were getting up one hour earlier."

"You explain it quite clearly, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "But here we are at the bonny brook. Now I can see my new straw hat as others see it."

"I see something far less gratifying to the eye than your new straw hat, Dog Wow," said Little Cat in a severe tone of voice. "I see an empty tin can."

"Some of those people, Little Cat," said Dog Wow in a severe tone of voice, "have been having a picnic, and have not cleared up before leaving."

"But there are no paper bags, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "It is my opinion that it fell off the ash cart when Mr. Jones was driving it over the bridge, and then it rolled down under the tree."

"And so Mr. Jones went on, Little Cat," said Dog Wow, "and never knew what he had lost."

"I think so, Dog Wow," said Little Cat. "Mr. Jones is a very conscientious ashman, and if he had missed that tin can he would have come back for it. How untidy it makes the place look!"

"We must take it to the dump ourselves, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "Wait a moment till I have looked at my new straw hat."

So Dog Wow looked down over the edge of the bridge and saw another Dog Wow looking up at him from the brook.

"It's all right, Little Cat," said Dog Wow, wagging his tail with satisfaction

as he joined Little Cat beside the empty tin can. "I don't think the long ribbon really makes me look like a child. Now what are we going to do about this tin can? It's too big for me to carry in my mouth."

"So I thought, Dog Wow," said Little Cat, poking the tin can with his cane. "But it is light and easy to roll. If you will carry my cane, I think I can roll it to the dump with my front paws. The hardest part will be to roll it up to the road."

Dog Wow took Little Cat's cane, and Little Cat started to roll the tin can up to the road. It was quite a job, as he had anticipated, and two or three times the tin can got away from Little Cat and rolled back down the slope. But he started it up again, and at last he got it on the level road and then it was easy

going. Little Cat rolled the empty tin can, and Dog Wow walked beside him carrying his cane. So they came to the dump and Little Cat gave the tin can a final push.

"I'm glad we came to the bonny brook, Little Cat," said Dog Wow. "Why, if we hadn't that empty tin can might have stayed there no one knows how long!"

"I'm glad we did, Dog Wow," said Little Cat, dusting off his front paws before he took back his cane. "Oh, those people! Those people! They think I'm asleep in my basket and you're asleep in your house, and here we are up and out, enjoying the beauties of nature and preventing them from being all cluttered up because Mr. Jones had heedlessly lost an empty tin can off his ash cart. What fun! What fun!"

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

MRS. ELBRIDGE F. STONEHAM, *Secretary*, Canton, Mass.

MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 11 Dana Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

Letters containing subscriptions to the paper, fifty cents a year, and money from the Sunshine Bags should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the Cheerful Letter Magazine should be sent to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Letters asking for help in studying at home, and requests from teachers and mothers who desire educational assistance, should be sent to Mrs. Charles P. Dillaby, 60 Aldworth Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, *Chairman*, 20 Clark Road, Wellesley Hills, Mass. A circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.